

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES (DECENTRALISATION) SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 20 October 1995, at 10am in the Meeting Room, London Road Centre, Kilmarnock

PRESENT: Councillors D Fulton (Chair), R Beattie, J Darnbrough, K Hall, E Jackson and A McIntyre.

ATTENDING: F Lees, Depute Chief Executive; D McVicar; D Stewart and D Campbell, Head of Public Relations and Marketing

1. SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES

The sederunt was taken and apologies intimated on behalf of Councillors T Farrell, J Kelly and D Sneller.

2. MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES (DECENTRALISATION) SUB-COMMITTEE OF 12 SEPTEMBER 1995

After including Councillor A McIntyre in the apologies, the minutes of the Policy and Resources (Decentralisation) Sub-Committee (issued) were noted.

3. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (issued) advising the Sub-Committee of the arrangements made for a further consultation exercise to be conducted by questionnaire and requesting that the Sub-Committee authorise the Chief Executive to proceed.

The Depute Chief Executive explained that the questionnaire randomly target 5,500 households, to be identified with the assistance of the Assessor.

After hearing the Depute Chief Executive in further explanation and in answer to members' concerns that arrangements for the disabled should be considered, it was agreed to:

- (a) approve arrangements for a further consultation exercise to be conducted by questionnaire;
- (b) authorise the Chief Executive to proceed;
- (c) note that the questionnaire will be submitted to the Policy and Resources (Publicity and Publication) Sub-Committee for approval prior to circulation; and
- (d) otherwise, note the terms of the report.

4. DECENTRALISATION - PROGRAMME OF VISITS

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (issued) advising the Sub-Committee of the arrangements made to visit other local authorities to examine what

arrangements have been put in place for decentralised decision making and service delivery.

The Depute Chief Executive explained that visits had been arranged with Dumbarton District Council on Wednesday 1 November 1995 and Fife Regional Council on Friday 3 November 1995. Discussions with Renfrew District Council were continuing.

After hearing the Depute Chief Executive in further explanation and in view of the tight timescales in relation to a visit to Renfrew District Council, it was agreed to:

- (a) distribute Renfrew District Council's decentralisation report to all Sub-Committee members, as an alternative to a visit;
- (b) receive a report on the visits at the next meeting; and
- (c) otherwise, note the terms of the report.

5. SEMINAR ON DECENTRALISATION

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (issued) proposing arrangements for a seminar to be held for elected members and officers on the subject of decentralised decision making and service delivery and seeking authority for the Chief Executive to proceed.

After hearing the Depute Chief Executive in explanation that a seminar will focus on workshops based on the visits to other authorities and that the suggested date was now 1 December 1995, it was agreed that:

- (a) a seminar on decentralised decision making and service delivery be held for elected members and officers on 1 December 1995;
- (b) the Chief Executive make all necessary arrangements; and
- (c) the terms of the report be otherwise noted.

6. INFORMATION AND ADVICE ASSISTANCE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Support Services (issued) outlining aspects of an information and advice system for East Ayrshire and steps that will require to be taken to establish this.

On behalf of the Director of Support Services, the Head of Public Relations and Marketing explained that the report should be read in conjunction with Item 7 of the agenda, "Decentralisation - Internal and External Communications".

After hearing the Head of Public Relations and Marketing further explain that the report would encompass the principles of a "one stop shop" approach to information and advice services, it was agreed to:

- (a) support in principle, the development of information and advice systems based on the requirements identified within the report;
- (b) instruct the Director of Support Services and the Head of Information Technology to report further on the requisite development of appropriate computer systems; and

- (c) remit to all Directors to consider, co-ordinate and report on their individual contributions to the support of the overall information and advice system for East Ayrshire.

7. DECENTRALISATION - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

There was submitted a report by the Head of Public Relations and Marketing (issued) outlining the principles of good communication which will be central to the Council as a whole, and the potential arrangements for supporting the Council's decentralisation structure in particular.

The Head of Public Relations and Marketing explained that the Council's general marketing/communication strategy will be the subject of a separate report to the Publicity and Publications Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee in due course.

After hearing the Head of Public Relations and Marketing in further explanation that good communication in plain English, backed-up with a new technology system, was essential for an East Ayrshire Council communication strategy, it was agreed to:

- (a) endorse the principles of effective internal and external communications contained within the report;
- (b) seek a detailed report and cost investigation from the Head of Information technology of personal computer networks for April 1996;
- (c)
- (d) ask the Chief Executive to investigate the options and cost of establishing a Council free-phone helpline facility.

8. COMMUNITY COUNCILS

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (issued) advising the Sub-Committee of the schemes of administration in place for the establishment and support of Community Councils and recommending that meetings be held with existing Community Councils in operation to discuss the arrangements the Council would propose making to pilot a preliminary scheme for decentralisation in the first year of the Council's operation.

The Depute Chief Executive reported that the preliminary scheme would help inform the Council's Draft Decentralisation Scheme which will be submitted to the Secretary of State by 1 April 1997.

After hearing the Depute Chief Executive in explanation and members' concern about the time it would take to contact all Community Councils individually, it was agreed to:

- (a) note that schemes and codes of practice are in operation for the establishment and support of Community Councils;
- (b) agree that officers review these schemes to address any differences of detail and bring forward proposals for a unified scheme;
- (c) agree that the Chief Executive write to Community Councils to ensure they are kept aware of the proposals the Council has to implement a preliminary scheme for decentralisation as of 1 April 1996 and offer to meet with any

Community Councils on a Local Committee Area basis, where further discussion would be considered to be helpful; and

- (d) otherwise, note the terms of the report.

9. DECENTRALISATION - AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (issued) outlining a timetable to ensure that proposals can be brought forward to pilot a preliminary scheme for decentralisation as of 1 April 1996 to inform the Council's Draft Decentralisation Scheme which will be submitted to the Secretary of State by 1 April 1997.

After hearing the Depute Chief Executive in explanation of the enclosed timetable and that a preliminary scheme would be drafted by January 1996 for April, the Sub-Committee agreed:

- (a) the terms of the timetable;
- (b) to note the progress made against the checklist; and
- (c) that the key dates be communicated to interested organisations in East Ayrshire.